

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

The following is a complete listing of the claims.

1. (Currently amended) An epidural catheter dispenser system, the system comprising:  
at least one sidewall and having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end being  
connected to a distal end piece, thereby defining an a single inner cavity;  
~~wherein the proximal end defines a loading aperture such that a catheter may be loaded or~~  
~~adjusted into the inner cavity through the loading aperture; and~~  
wherein the distal end piece defines the upper border of the inner cavity; and  
wherein the distal end piece includes a dispensing aperture such that a loaded catheter in  
the inner cavity can be extracted from the inner cavity through the dispensing  
aperture.
2. (Currently amended) The epidural catheter dispenser system of claim 1 wherein the  
sidewall's proximal end is further connected to a proximal end piece, ~~thereby further~~  
defining ~~an~~ the inner cavity,  
wherein the proximal end piece simultaneously defines a loading aperture such  
that a catheter may be loaded or adjusted into the inner cavity through the loading  
aperture.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~1, 2, 3 or 4~~ 1 or 2 wherein the dispenser is  
made of a semi-rigid material.
6. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~1, 2, 3 or 4~~ 1 or 2 wherein the dispenser is  
positioned in either hand of a user such that the distal end is directed toward the user's  
thumb and index finger so that the catheter contained within the inner cavity may be  
completely extracted through the dispensing aperture.

Serial No. 09/989,342  
Reply to Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment

7. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~1, 2, 3 or 4~~ 1 or 2 wherein the sidewall takes the shape of a cone.
8. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~1, 2, 3 or 4~~ 1 or 2 wherein the sidewall takes the shape of a cylinder.
9. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~1, 2, 3 or 4~~ 1 or 2 wherein the sidewall takes the shape of a polyhedron.
10. (Currently amended) The system of claim ~~1, 2, 3 or 4~~ 1 or 2 wherein the inner cavity entirely confines the catheter except through the dispensing aperture.
11. (Currently amended) ~~The~~ A method of preventing contamination of an epidural catheter by loading a catheter in an epidural catheter dispenser system, the system comprising:  
at least one sidewall, the sidewall being conical, cylindrical or polyhedral and having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end being connected to a distal end piece, thereby defining an a single inner cavity;  
~~wherein the proximal end defines a loading aperture such that a catheter may be loaded or adjusted into the inner cavity through the loading aperture, and~~  
wherein the distal end piece further defines a dispensing aperture such that a loaded catheter in the inner cavity can be extracted from the inner cavity through the dispensing aperture.
12. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the proximal end of the epidural catheter dispenser system's sidewall is connected to a proximal end piece, thereby further defining ~~an~~ the inner cavity,  
wherein the proximal end piece defines a loading aperture such that a catheter ~~may~~ can be loaded or adjusted into the inner cavity through the loading aperture.
13. (Canceled)

Serial No. 09/989,342  
Reply to Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment

14. (Canceled)
15. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~11, 12, 13 or 14~~ 11 or 12 wherein the epidural catheter dispenser system is made of a semi-rigid material.
16. (Original) The method of claim 11 or 12 wherein the loading of the catheter into the epidural dispenser system is performed manually.
17. (Original) The method of claim 11 or 12 wherein the loading of the catheter into the epidural dispenser system is performed mechanically.
18. (Original) The method of claim 11 or 12 wherein the loading of the catheter into the epidural dispenser system is performed through an automated process.
- 19-50. (Cancelled)
51. (New) An epidural catheter dispenser system capable of one-hand operation by a user, the system comprising:  
at least one sidewall having a proximal end and a distal end;  
a proximal end piece connected to the proximal end; and  
a distal end piece connected to the distal end and defining the upper border of the inner cavity,  
wherein the sidewall, the proximal end piece and the distal end piece define a single inner cavity.
52. (New) The epidural catheter dispenser system of claim 51, wherein the distal end piece includes a dispensing aperture such that a catheter loaded in the inner cavity can be extracted from the inner cavity through the dispensing aperture.

Serial No. 09/989,342  
Reply to Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment

- C
53. (New) The epidural catheter dispenser system of claim 51, wherein the proximal end piece further defines a loading aperture such that a catheter can be loaded or adjusted into the inner cavity through the loading aperture.
  54. (New) The system of claim 51, 52, or 53, wherein the dispenser is made of a semi-rigid material.
  55. (New) The system of claim 51, 52, or 53, wherein the dispenser is positioned in either hand of the user such that the distal end is directed toward the user's thumb and index finger so that the catheter contained within the inner cavity may be completely extracted through the dispensing aperture.
  56. (New) The system of claim 51, 52, or 53 wherein the sidewall takes the shape of a cylinder or a polyhedron.
  57. (New) The system of claim 51, 52, or 53, wherein the inner cavity entirely confines the catheter except through the dispensing aperture.
- 